

Appl. No. 10/654,789
Amdt. Dated June 4, 2004
Reply to Office action of May 28, 2004

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the last paragraph starting on page 7 and continuing onto page 8 and the first full paragraph on page 8 with the following amended paragraphs:

As shown in more detail in figures 4 – 8, boot 38 and more particularly boot second end 42, further includes a deformable sealing solution having in one embodiment contemplated the form of an annular lip or crimping/sealing area ~~[[44]]~~ 45 at the end of the boot 38. This sealing area ~~[[44]]~~ 45 will prevent the joint chamber from being contaminated by dirt, water, road grime, etc, and lubricant from leaking from within the joint. More specifically, end 42 includes at least one and preferably a pair of sealing beads 48. In one embodiment the sealing beads 48 generally have a round or circular shape. The sealing beads 48 may be deformed i.e., “crimped” or otherwise compressed to more tightly seal boot end 42 and thus boot 38 to the boot cover 47. In one contemplated embodiment as shown in the drawings a first bead 38 extends from the end of sealing area ~~[[44]]~~ 45 generally parallel to the shaft 14. A second sealing bead 48 is located on an outer surface of the sealing area ~~[[44]]~~ 45 at an approximate 90° angle from the other bead 48. The sealing area ~~[[44]]~~ 45 also includes an annular channel 52 located on an inner surface of the sealing area ~~[[44]]~~ 45. The above described sealing solution may, of course, includes any number, shape, size, composition, and placement of sealing beads 48 or other suitable sealing means depending only on the desired application and result. In the preferred embodiment shown in figures 4 – 8, for example, a pair of substantially rounded beads 48 comprised of a flexible material are included. Beads 48 may, however, comprise any suitable natural ~~[[of]]~~ or synthetic material or combination thereof. The beads are generally molded into the boot 38 but it is contemplated to attach the beads after the molding process.

In operation the boot 38 will be secured between the boot can ~~[[48]]~~ 47 and the shaft 14. The connection between the boot 38 and the boot can 47 is generally accomplished by crimping the edge of the can 47 around the sealing area ~~[[44]]~~ 45 of the boot 38. In many prior art boot cover to boot connections imperfections in the contact surfaces between the boot and can would leave gaps in the seal thus creating an entry or exit point for the propshaft or halfshaft joint. This would allow for possible contamination of the joint or loss of lubricant, thus reducing the life of the joint. The present invention having the novel bead design will aid in ensuring the sealing of the crimping area between the boot 38 and cover 47. The beads 48 will prevent any surface imperfections between the boot 38 and cover 47 from creating any entry or exit point into or out of the joint. The sealing beads 48 will ensure any gap between the can 47 and the boot 38 is properly sealed.